

Manitoba College Literary Society.



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# Problems of Greater Canada,

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— BEING AN —

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

— BY —

REV. DR. BRYCE, Honorary President,

DELIVERED IN CONVOCATION HALL, OCTOBER 25TH, 1895.

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WINNIPEG :  
MANITOBA FREE PRESS PRINT.  
1895.

84/85

1885

# GREATER CANADA.

**Settlement of Our Vacant Lands—Methods of Immigration—The Unifying of the Various Elements of the Population; the Free Public School the Chief Agent in this.**

Our Northwestern Canada closes this year, the first quarter of a century of its existence, as a part of the Dominion. Ushered into its new life with turmoil and rebellion, it has ever since been a chief element in the thought and projects of the Dominion. It is true there is west of Lake Superior in Canada even yet but a handful of people. All told our Northwestern population little exceeds that of the city of Montreal, yet Manitoba, the Territories and British Columbia occupy a large part of the discussions of the Dominion parliament and of the thought of our Canadian people.

The reason of this is not hard to find. A generation ago the eastern provinces were unconnected, and unacquainted with one another. Their British connection was their only bond. It was the thought of an united half-continent that brought the provinces together. The acquisition of Rupert's Land was a pre-confederation idea in old Canada, going back to 1857, but it became at confederation a living issue. It was a noble dream for our statesmen that they should rule a territory whose eastern and western shores are washed by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans; it wakened the fires of patriotic hearts to feel that the harbors of Halifax and Esquimaux, the rendezvous of the great navy whose flag is known on every sea, were our Canadian outposts; it roused our national spirit to think that we had the possibility of building

up a free, intelligent, purposeful, and hardy nation under the aegis of the Polar star.

## WRONG EXPECTATIONS.

It is useless for us to discuss whether our quarter of a century just passed might not have been better spent by us. No doubt the wild visions and prophecies of twenty-five years ago have not been realized. Our population is not so great as we had fondly hoped it would be; our farmers are not so wealthy as it was thought they would become; our people have not advanced as we had pictured they would do in material, intellectual, and aesthetic respect; but we can see now that our expectations were unwarranted, that we failed to note that a nation, like an individual, must pass through the struggles of a developing life before it can come to stability and greatness. "Only those are crowned and sainted Who with grief have been acquainted."

## NEW CONDITIONS.

The conditions of life on the prairies were entirely new to Canadians; a different climate had to be met with and studied; new features of agriculture pressed themselves on men's attention; the prairie land and the western sea of mountains needed to be connected with the eastern provinces by the railway, and it took the full power of the Dominion to accomplish this; representative government was unknown throughout the greater part of the

new region, and new, miscellaneous and untried communities were compelled to struggle with unaccustomed surroundings. It is not surprising that the advancement of newer regions of the Dominion has been less rapid than was expected, or that we have a feeling of disappointment in regard to some of our cherished plans.

The time has not, however been lost. Sudden wealth would have been our ruin. Hasty civilization like a plant been our ruin. Civilization like a plant which grows too rapidly, lacks the elements of permanence. Many families came to the Northwest to spend a few years in prairie farming, accumulate fortunes and then retire to their old homes to live in ease. This end has not been reached, and it would have been a great pity had it been attained. Many settlers sacrificed foresight, industry, thrift and ordinary prudence in their settlement. It is well that they have been taught lessons of wisdom. Though we have our harvests of abounding plenty in Manitoba, yet we have our years of drought frost and leanness. Though our soil is of wonderful fertility, yet the neglectful farmer has the Nemesis of weeds, and rust and smut and fire to rob him of his crop. Our people almost all ran into extravagance. This has been checked. "Sweet are the uses of adversity." We know better to-day how to use our resources, how to plan for the future, how to avoid unprofitable projects, and how to use our past experience than we ever did before.

We are still, however, called upon to face large questions. Our greater Canada offers us great problems that we must solve. Our eastern relatives tell us that we are always agitated, always in a turmoil, that our province and especially Winnipeg its capital, is mercurial and never at rest. This is probably true, but it is no fault of ours. We are working under new conditions, new issues are arising, new possibilities appear before us, and new hopes excite us. This is not possible in the older provinces; to us nothing else is possible. Let me ask you this evening to look at some of these unsettling problems.

#### SETTLEMENT NEEDED.

We have ever to keep before us the settlement of our wide, unoccupied country. This problem is greatly increased in difficulty by the fact that there is little land in Manitoba open

for free settlement. Excluding the sand hill district on the Assiniboine and the broken country of the White Mud river and the timber lands of Riding mountains, there is little government land open for free settlement except northward, in what may be called the inaccessible lake region. And yet, though most of the land is out of the hands of the government, our province is not settled. A province which, allowing five persons on each quarter section and a reasonable proportion in towns and cities could contain about a million of people, has not one-fifth of that number. How are we to get the people we need, how are we to make it possible for them to settle, and what steps are feasible for our government to adopt is a problem of first importance.

#### OUR VACANT LANDS.

Let us see who owns the vacant lands of Manitoba. After making various enquiries and estimates, the following may be taken to approximate to the amount of land in possession of the corporations named:

Canadian Pacific railway, 1,000,000 acres.

Southwestern railway (controlled by C. P. R.), 400,000 acres.

C. P. R. land grant (Lake Dauphin), 400,000 acres.

Northwestern Land company, 500,000 acres.

Manitoba & Northwestern railway, 220,000 acres.

School lands, 1,200,000 acres.

Hudson Bay company, 1,000,000 acres.

Red River Valley half-breed lands unoccupied, 1,000,000 acres.

In the figures the writer has kept well within the amounts possessed by the different bodies. But how startling a problem it is to enquire, How can these be utilized? The difficulty does not arise as many think from the high figures placed upon their lands by these bodies. Much land can be bought at \$1 and \$2 an acre. The C. P. R. lands and N. W. Co.'s lands, amounting to two and a quarter millions of acres in Manitoba, do not average above \$3.75 an acre, and it must be remembered that these are mostly selected lands. These companies all want to sell. There is too much unoccupied land in the country to make it profitable to hold it.

### A PLAN WANTED.

What is to be done? The present method will not settle up the country. Five thousand men came from Ontario to help Manitoba in the harvest. Many of them would remain, but no way opens up to them to obtain land easily. The terms of any of the companies are beyond their reach. Were the lands free they might perhaps try to homestead, but the effort required to make a beginning, and also to pay their instalments with interest deters them. Only a small percentage of them will likely remain with us. Inducements cannot be held out at present to small land occupiers and agriculturists of England, Scotland and Ireland, sufficient to bring them to Manitoba. Even accounts of our great harvest of this year, while they draw attention to our province, cannot open up a way for the willing immigrant to make a beginning. Who must act in this matter? Plainly the provincial government. Suppose the provincial government would arrange with some of these companies for a million and a half of acres. That would give about a quarter section to 10,000 settlers. Let the settler occupy the land for five years without paying anything, but being required to perform certain settlement duties. Then taking the land as valued at \$3.75 per acre by paying \$50 a year, or thereabout for 15 years thereafter he could pay capital and 5 per cent. interest, and do so without being in the slightest degree harassed or oppressed. Ten thousand homesteads would mean fifty thousand of a population. This would give a large volume of business for the province, and would begin to remove the reproach of our vacant prairies.

### STILL FURTHER.

Should the province feel disposed to face a still more liberal project it might be carried out. The United States estimate that every able bodied settler represents \$1,000 of value to the country, is probably too large; but suppose \$500 be the value to the country of the settler and his family, the scheme of obtaining 10,000 new settlers would mean \$5,000,000 of value added to our resources. If this be true it would even be profitable to sell the land thus obtained by the province for one dollar per acre to actual settlers, if not

indeed to give them free homesteads of the land altogether. The question is, have we the courage and determination to undertake the scheme?

### RED RIVER VALLEY.

We have learned in late years that the Red River Valley is the garden of Manitoba. Its soil is the best, and its averages the highest to be had over a series of years of any part of our province. But the vacant lands are held by a municipality of residents and speculators. The one million four hundred thousand acres given to the halfbreeds may have some poor land, but if drainage be effected it will largely be the very best of land. Legislation would enable the holders of this land to enter their land on government registers, and to have it sold on somewhat the same terms as we have proposed for the railway lands. Suburban lands within twenty or thirty miles of the city have been offered to the amount of 300,000 acres at an average of little over \$5 an acre. The land might be divided under a government scheme into 80 acre lots and offered on long terms of settlement. Market garden lands within ten miles of Winnipeg could be divided up into 40 acre lots and sold under government assurances on such terms as would attract many from the old world to be useful gardeners with our city population affording a steady market.

### ATTRACTING IMMIGRATION.

Were such offers of agricultural lands of 160 acres made to farmers, suburban farms of 80 acres brought before those with a small capital and market garden holdings of 40 acres placed upon the market, and all free for a term of years subject to improvements, and to be paid for on long time, there would be a field for agents abroad never before afforded. Why could not our school lands also be sold by the government on long time to great advantage? They are needed as an endowment. Were they offered at \$10 an acre with free occupation for five years with settlement duties, and payment spread over even thirty years with interest at five per cent, good lands would be taken up rapidly and the revenue would be secured as well as a handsome endowment be established.

With how much more definite a purpose would our immigrant agents in Ontario, Quebec and the maritime provinces, and England, Scotland Ire-

land, Germany and Sweden undertake their work could they offer such advantages to the poor but industrious classes willing to seek new homes in our western prairies.

We need but the determination to undertake the scheme. The matter will not remedy itself. A railway company, a colonization company, an association of private land holders working ever so well cannot give the confidence to those coming from abroad that a government can. Our government has shown itself a practical and energetic government in other matters; what is to hinder their grappling with this all important problem?

#### IMMIGRATION.

It is very important that our province should be filled with settlers, but it is more important that it should be occupied by settlers of the right kind. By this we do not mean to introduce any narrow restrictions. We do not say that they should be all Canadians, we do not say that they should all speak English, we do not say that they should be possessed of means, we do not even say that they should all be highly intelligent settlers. We remember that the eastern portions of the Dominion were peopled by the poor but industrious classes brought from many lands. There should be nothing narrow about our policy if we would build up our province. We know that no one nation possesses all the good qualities. We despise the man who can see nothing good in one of another country or race from himself. Hitherto our population has been mostly Canadian, and we must say we think it a good thing that our provinces have supplied so large a proportion of our people, and that the counties of Huron and Bruce have done their part so well.

Lately there appeared in the newspapers letters stating that Canadians were not fond of Englishmen and would give them no favor in this province, and then in reply a Canadian stated that Englishmen in Manitoba looked down upon Canadians. Now, this is all nonsense. There are foolish people in all nations, but the sensible right-thinking people of Manitoba who are in a vast majority, know no such distinctions. We do not admire men from any country or clime who claim consideration for their descent, education, position, culture or superior experience. We are on an equal

footing in Manitoba. No country in the world is more willing to acknowledge merit in whomsoever found; no country is more severe on foppery, assumption, and dilettantism. Our bracing northern air is an enemy to indolence, and we have a warm welcome ready for any settler, except the handless, shiftless wailer on Providence. We have no titled aristocracy in Manitoba; we want none of the so-called tone, which transforms our steady, hearty, strong young men into specimens of the simian type.

Our people, however, have several high ideals as to what makes the best kind of settler. We appreciate much more highly those who will make steady, loyal and useful settlers.

(1) We do admire the aristocracy of character. It is no disgrace to be poor. The great majority of settlers we may expect in our province will be poor. Whether they are the laborious working classes from Sweden, Germany, the mother country, or our older provinces, we welcome them all. We will willingly try and find a place for the educated business man, the likely professional man, and even the university graduate, who has no profession if they will turn to anything that offers, and undertake the work that lies nearest their hand. But we do not want the young man, given to dissipation, sent by his friends to Manitoba that they may be rid of him; we think it very foolish for the helpless and dependent to come to the hardships of a new land, and we do not ask the lazy, the mere pleasure seeker, or the social parasite to join us. We admire uprightness of character, we welcome as the true nobility those who are worthy:

"The honest man, though ever so poor  
Is king of man for all that."

2. We admire the aristocracy of in-

We have seen men and women and families come to Manitoba, linger about the city, waiting Micawber-like for something to turn up. Coming as immigrants to a country they seem to think that the government, the mayor and city council should be present to receive them. They complain of the country, the climate, the people, the water, the prices, the mud and of everything else. They will not work. They would accept government positions, the management of business houses, leading positions in society,

or a vacant judgeship, but they will not labor. The work is not congenial to their taste or strength, or expectation. They become a burden to the rest of the community, and in time drift on to some other place and reenact the same performance. To such Manitobans give no quarter. We believe thoroughly in the saying of that high authority of the olden time: "That if any would not work, neither should he eat."

3. We admire the aristocracy of intelligence.

We hail immigration from other lands when it brings us new ideas. When the Mennonites came to us and showed us from their Russian experience how to live upon the absolutely treeless prairie, they brought us a new and valuable idea. When the fruit grower and gardener, and the mechanic of every grade comes to us and shows us how to meet our new conditions, how to do something we could not do before, how to improve our country, we welcome him with heartiness. The teacher from abroad to school or college to give a new educational impulse, the electrician or the skilled mechanic to produce what was before unknown, the minister to give his devotion and work for the cause dear to him, or the man of any occupation of active restless brain we welcome heartily, as coming to co-operate in building up our commonwealth. What value a man of thought and adaptation is to a community! Ideas, after all, are more than dollars, and intelligence counts more to a country than riches. Yes, "Men, high minded men, With powers as far above dull brutes

endued,  
In forest, brake, or den,  
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles  
rude.

\* \* \*  
These constitute a state."

4. We admire the aristocracy of taste. It must not be supposed because we demand honest, practical and intelligent men and women to help in building up our province, that we want boorish or uncultivated citizens. We recognize the practical features of the settler as most important to a new country, but these are only means to an end. As soon as possible we desire to see the tasteful and the aesthetic developed. We see no beauty in the ideal of clinging to the leaky, unsightly, smoky and uncomfortable old settler's house any long-

er than the settler needs to live in it. We quite recognize the difference between the Christian model and that of the Russian novelist Tolstoi as it has been epigrammatically expressed: Christianity says, "Be happy in your cleanliness; Tolstoi says, "Be happy in your slovenliness." We love to see the tastefully kept settler's cabin, the busy housewife's effort to make her family neat and respectable, the farmer's anxiety to have a farm and all its belongings in good order, and even the student who dresses neatly and keeps his room ready at any time for inspection. We detest the careless, untidy settler, the lazy bachelor on his homestead who allows his dirty hovel to become still dirtier, the student, or clerk, or servant, or any one else careless of his or her personal appearance. Yes, we admire the aristocracy of taste. Many of the old half pay officers who came to old Canada never made good settlers; could not cut down a tree or hold a plough well; but their growing sons learned how to do all these things, and the cultivation and good breeding and taste of such families were of very great value in all the localities in which they settled.

We love and desire for our country:  
"The stamp of true nobility, high honor,  
stainless truth,  
The earnest quest of noble ends; the generous heart of youth;  
The love of country, soaring far above  
dull party strife;  
The love of learning, art and song — the crowning grace of life;  
The love of science, soaring far through  
nature's hidden ways;  
The love and fear of nature's God — a nation's highest praise."

#### AN UNIFIED PEOPLE.

Perhaps visitors who come to us from other provinces cannot realize what we mean by saying that we want in Manitoba an united and homogeneous people. They immediately take it for granted that we wish to rush in and conform every one willy nilly to some model of our own; that we have made a bed of Procrustes, and will stretch out or lop off all pedal extremities till they can be made to fit into this. This would be sufficiently absurd. Especially in the matter of religion are the people of Manitoba determined that perfect liberty shall be allowed. Freedom to worship God unmolested is a matter of first importance with us. In few

provinces has there been such freedom from religious rancor. In matters of opinion the general view of the public is totally averse to coercion.

But we remember that our people are gathered from the ends of the earth. An eastern enquirer has lately told us that in two schools in the north of Winnipeg he found English—including Scotch, Irish and Welsh—English Canadian, French Canadian, Metis, Cree, German, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Syrian, Jewish, Icelandic, and Finlander—nineteen nationalities. Now we desire as soon as possible to awaken a spirit that will weave all these into one fabric, of which the strands may be many colored, but where the strength and cohesion will be one. We wish to have all our immigrants from abroad fall in with us and say, We are Manitobans; we are Canadians. Before they can do this we wish them to feel thus. In order that this may be the case it is important to have them as soon as possible possessed of all political rights. With the exception of the Icelanders none of our foreign elements take an interest in public affairs. All classes should feel themselves a part of the country, not standing up for class rights or claiming representatives speaking their own tongue, or maintaining that they have or desire special privileges, but wanting no more than any other Manitoban and wanting no less. That is our ideal, and it ill becomes some of our eastern visitors to come and lecture us when they do not understand our situation, or our aspirations. We want Mennonite and French-Canadian, and Icelandic, and Jew, and German to remember their history, their language, and their religious customs; but we most earnestly desire a common movement for the education, social and material development, of all kinds of people in Manitoba, irrespective of creed, or tongue, or nationality. We would have unity in our diversity; and diversity and freedom in our unity.

#### HOW TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

We have no hesitation in saying that the most efficient agent in accomplishing this is likely to be the free public school. It is a positive delight to go into one of the Winnipeg public schools to-day and see under a band of upward of eighty teachers,

unsurpassed in the Dominion, our future citizens growing up to respect and understand each other. The sons and daughters of our most influential citizens as well as the children of the less favored are there, and are receiving a sound, practical education. Under well educated, refined, and capable teachers, who will dare to maintain that a good, well-balanced and practical education, cannot be given to the rich man's child and the poor man's child side by side?

Rich and poor must always meet together. The rich man of to-day may be the poor man of to-morrow; and the poor boy of to-day may be the wealthy merchant of the next generation. Let us minimize the dangers of the struggle between labor and capital, let us banish unwise and unreal social distinctions, let us strengthen our commonwealth by making our communities, educated, self respecting and strong by mutual acquaintance of class with class.

"Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth."

"Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth."

#### HOW TO BE EFFECTED.

To effect this the plain duty of our people is to stand by the free public schools. We have too much of compacts, and bills of rights, and old understandings and political history, and what politicians of a former generation thought and did. Very likely the great men of the past did the best they could for their own time; but they could not know what we want for our time. The very error they made was that they did not grasp the underlying principles on which all law of a true and abiding kind must be based. They made compromises, sought for expedients, and really left us to adjust the real difficulties when our time came. All honor to the fathers of Confederation. They did wonderfully. But how could men, brought up under the trammels of small, divided provinces, plan with perfect satisfaction for this greater Canada. The chief editor of the Toronto Globe, one of the most able and brilliant men of the younger generation of Canadians has lately visited western Canada, and what did he say, not a week ago? "We in Ontario are rather arrogant in our provincial pride. We hold the sceptre of supremacy in the confederation, and we may hold it for many years

to come, but we must reckon with Manitoba, or better, we must co-operate with Manitoba for these are bound to become dominating states in the Canadian union." What does this mean? What but this, that Manitoba, not yet a generation old, has taken a stand in favor of a juster view of things, that she is facing old problems anew, that she has made up her mind that special privileges of class over class, creed over creed, race over race, or man over man shall cease, that equity shall prevail, and that special privileges, political, social, religious or personal shall be given by law to none.

#### LIBERTY IN LANGUAGE.

But while the free public school will be maintained by Manitoba at all hazards, yet there is no disposition to ignore prejudices or the strongly marked preferences of some. For example take the matter of language. It is manifest to the least observing that the English tongue is to be the medium of intercourse in Manitoba and the rest of the greater Canada to the west. Yet it may surprise many to learn that our school acts of 1890 have no word of restriction as to the language to be used in the public schools of the province. No doubt English will be taught and ought to be taught in every public school, but to accomplish this with foreigners it is plain their own language should at present be allowed. For months past members of the advisory board have been discussing methods of having bi-lingual readers in French and German authorized, that they might be used in the schools of those who speak these tongues. This is but reasonable. Only let minorities accept the situation, and the authorities may be relied upon to give not only fair, but sympathetic consideration to marked predilections, which do not interfere with the school law. Not only so, but everything goes to show that were these minorities heartily to accept the school act, fair representation might be counted on for them on the advisory board and in all official positions.

#### AS TO RELIGION.

No doubt this burning question is a matter of difficulty in public schools. The minority has convinced itself that the establishment of free public schools was aimed against the Cath-

olic religion. There never was a greater mistake. The aim of the public school act was to establish equity between class and class, in taxation, in opportunity, and in general benefit. The passing of the act and the general election of 1892, in which it was sustained, were singularly free from religious animosity or acrimony. Whatever heat has been seen originated in St. Boniface. In the large centres of Brandon and Portage la Prairie, the writer, as commissioner, lately saw the Roman Catholic pupils of the town all sitting side by side with those of other denominations. The advisory board extended all certificates of the teachers of the Catholic board, although their standard was very low, for a year after the old act was abolished. The department of education has shown the greatest consideration in allowing permits to be granted that French and German schools might not be deprived of teachers who knew the language required. And to the plan adopted by the department in French and German schools, as to religion, no reasonable objection can be offered. In the French and Mennonite schools the department has required a close adhesion to the subjects of the curriculum fixed by the Advisory Board, but when the school had closed at the regular hour, no objection has been offered to the giving of religious instruction to the children. To have interfered with this would have been harsh and unreasonable. Just as in hundreds of school houses in Manitoba all the religious denominations were unrestricted in the use, under the trustees, of buildings for Sunday services and prayer meetings, so the use of the school houses for the purposes named in French and German districts, seemed eminently fair. Should the minorities heartily accept the public school system, there would seem to be no reason why their wish in this respect might not always be regarded.

#### CONCLUSION.

We have thus noted shortly some of the problems which meet us and demand settlement in our wide west—the Greater Canada. The settlement of our lands, the bringing in of population, the effort to unify our diversified people, and provision for a fair and effective means of educating our youths are great problems. But



surely our provinces and our western peoples are equal to the demand. It will require our leading minds, our best effort, our closest thought, our greatest perseverance, our most judicial spirit, and our highest self-control and consideration for the feelings and prejudices of others, to effect all that lies before us. But if we have true love of country it will go far to give us success in our endeavors. We may have great diversities of view, but we agree in a hundred things. We have a splendid heritage. Brave French explorers suffered hardships, met the Indians, penetrated the waterways of Canada, and even led the way to the Rocky Mountains and the great Saskatchewan. Let us remember their sacrifices.

United Empire Loyalists making noble sacrifices for king and country, with English, Scottish and Irish settlers, have built up old Canada; while German, Icelandic, Swede and Hungar-

ian elements have come to throw in their lot with us in the greater Canada. Let us make our land worthy of the races from which sprang Shakespeare, Boswell, Goethe, and Gustavus Adolphus. May the sweet words of a Canadian poetess be realized in our greater Canada:

"The humblest here  
Walks in the sunshine, free as is the  
peer.  
Proudly he stands with muscles strong  
and free,  
The serf—the slave of no man doomed to  
be.  
His own, the arm the heavy axe that  
wields;  
His own, the hands that till the summer  
fields;  
His, own, the babes that prattle in the  
door;  
His own, the wife that treads the cot-  
tage floor;  
All the sweet ties of life to him are  
sure."  
All the proud rights of manhood are  
secure."

